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VINDICATION

OF

Slingsby Bethel Esq;

One of the

SHERIFFS

OF

London and Middlesex:

Against the several

SLANDERS

Cast upon him

Upon the occasion of his being proposed, for one of the BURGESSES to Serve in the late PARLIAMENT.

FOR THE

Burrough of Southwark.

London, Printed for *Francis Smith* at the *Elephant* and *Castle* in *Cornhil*, 1681.

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One of the

SHERIFFS

OF

LONDON and MIDDLESEX:

Against the Several

SLANDERS

Cast upon him

Upon the occasion of his late Prosecuted,
for the due Discharge of the SHERIFFS to Serve
in the Years EIGHTY and EIGHTY ONE.

For which

By [illegible]

The Vindication

OF

Slingsby Bethel Esquire,

One of the SHERIFFS of

LONDON and *MIDDLESEX*;

AGAINST

The several Scandals cast upon him, &c.

SO long as I kept my private Station (in which I have spent a great part of my Life:) I thank God I can say, That though my Dealings in the World have been considerable, I have had my Conversation so, as not to meet with, or deserve (as I reasonably hope) any Reproach from man.

But no sooner was I (contrary to my Inclinations and Humour) called forth by my Fellow-Citizens, to a Publick Employment, than the Envy and Malice of ill-minded Men was awakned, so, as that (to use the Prophets words) *They bent their Tongues like their Bow, for lies against me.*

This I found in a great measure upon my Election to the Place I now bear in this City; but when I was Nominated at the late Election, for one of the Burgesses for *Southwark*, This Malevolent Spirit (being grown outragious) mustered up all its Force, and poured forthwith upon me whole Volleys of as Spiteful Calumnies as Wit, sharpened by the keenest Malice, could invent.

Notwithstanding all which, I considered, That this was not my Case alone, but a common Accident attending Persons standing in Competition for Places of so great Honour and Trust; and especially, where the Election is to be determined by the Suffrages of a great Body of People, divided by their several Parties and Interests; amongst whom will be still found some Ill Men, who preferring their Private Interests before the Publick Service, will not baulk the foulest Practices, for the obtaining of their own Ends; and therefore I was at the first Resolved to sit down quietly under the Satisfaction and Assurance of mine own Innocency, rather than to foul my Fingers by Raking into that filthy Dunghil of Reproaches cast up against me, without the least Colour of Truth or Reason.

But being told by divers of my Fellow-Citizens that I ought to do some-

thing as well to Vindicate the Honour of the Place I now bear amongſt them, as to Juſtifie their Choice of me to that Office: And alſo, that thoſe of the Neighbouring *Burrough*, may not be thought to have been miſtaken, and deceived in the Perſon whom (ſince that time) they preferred to a place of ſo great Truſt: I thought fit to do them and my ſelf ſo much Right, as to Publiſh that which here follows, for the detecting of the Malitious Falſhood of thoſe impudent Slanders, which have been ſet on Foot, on purpoſe to diſable me from holding any place of ſo great Truſt.

Firſt, *Then it was Objected, that I am a* Papiſt *and a* Jeſuit *and* (to give that lye the better Credit,) *that upon ſome variance happening between me and Dr.* Oates, *he did declare that he knew me beyond the Seas to be ſuch.*

This indeed would have been a ſufficient barr, to my admiſſion to any place of Publick Truſt, and much more to my Sitting in the Parliament, who have ſhewed ſo great a Zeal to the *Proteſtant Religion*, and would have forfeited my Head alſo, had the ſame been true. But (not to mention here the Teſts that I have lately taken to the contrary,) as thoſe that have known my conſtant Converſation, or what I have Writ and Publiſhed, will not believe that I have any Kindneſs for that Religion, ſo the Doctor is ready to declare to any one that deſires information in that point, that he was never the Author of any ſuch Report; nor could he know me beyond Sea, under any Character whatſoever; for I do affirm, That I was never out of *England* ſince One thouſand ſix hundred ſeventy two, and I doubt not but the *Doctor* will ſatisfie any, that ſhall ask the queſtion, that he never went beyond the Seas till the Year One thouſand ſix hundred ſeventy ſeven. Nevertheleſs, the *Doctor* not being in Town, to contradict this Story at the time of the Poll in *Southwark*, it was well enough Deſigned to ſerve that turn.

Secondly, *It was ſaid, that I was a Souldier in the Parliament Army in the time of the late Wars, and was moſt Cruel and Unmerciful in the exercise of Arms.*

This, as it ſeems inconſiſtent with the former Character, ſo hath it in it ſelf as little of Truth; but among a divided Multitude, in a jealous Age, when the generality of Men are more prone to believe any thing of ill that they hear, than to be at the trouble to examine the Truth of what is ſaid, it matters not whether Reports be true or probable, ſo as they be delivered with ſufficient Confidence, and the more variety there is in thoſe Stories (however inconſiſtant they may be) the better are they fitted to the various and different Humours and Intereſts of Man-kind: And the bold and induſtrious Calumniator by this Method of Proceeding, doth often prevail ſo far upon ſome of all Parties, as to bring the perſon he hath a mind to oppoſe, under their diſlike; And although (the matter of this Election remaining under queſtion,) I ſhall not ſay, that this Project had its full effect in my Caſe; yet to demonſtrate, that the laſt mentioned Objection was a meer Fiction; deſigned onely to ſerve this occaſion, and could not be juſtly reflected on me: I do affirm, and ſeveral *Hambrough* Merchants now living may remember, and the Regiſtries of their Courts will plainly ſhew, That I went to *Hambrough* in the Year One thouſand ſix hundred thirty ſeven, and lived there in continual imployment, until *December*, One thouſand ſix hundred forty nine; ſo as I could have no hand in the War, or change of Government which happened

pened in *England* within that time: And though after my return into *England*, I did with others ſubmit to the Government I found there, yet did I never Imbrace any other then Civil Offices; in which, I hope I may ſay without Arrogancie, I demeaned my ſelf with that Integrity, Indifferencie, and Moderation, that I may juſtly challenge the greateſt of my Enemies, to inſtance in, or to name any one Act of Severity, Injuſtice, or Partiality, that I ever ſhewed towards any Party or Perſon whatſoever.

Thirdly, *That being at* Hambrough *at ſuch time as the late Kings Death was reſolved of in* England, *I did there ſay, That rather than he ſhould want an Executioner, I would come thence to perform the Office.*

Although I do reſent this moſt odious, and malicious Slander, with the higheſt Indignation imaginable, yet having brought my Action at Law, for Vindication of my ſelf in this Point, I ſhall not in this place, diſcourſe any thing of that Subject, leſt I ſhould ſeem to anticipate Publick Juſtice, or in any ſort gratifie my Adverſaries, by letting them know, what I have to give in Evidence, to prove the wilful Malice of thoſe that caſt this Reproach upon me; or what I have to offer in aggravation of this Scandal: Nevertheleſs, I ſhall take that liberty here, to ſay I was born a Gentleman, and have had my Education accordingly, and am of too great a Spirit to ſtoop to an Office of ſo baſe a nature to ſerve the greateſt Prince or State in the World.

Fourthly, *That I was* [illegible] *only one of the late Kings Judges, but one of thoſe two perſons in Vizards, that Aſſiſted on the Scaffold at his Death.*

This I may call a home thruſt, a blow levelled, not at my Honour and Reputation only, but (ſince the Perſons ſo Characterized are Excepted out of the Act of General Pardon and Oblivion,) at my Life and Fortune alſo, and ought more deſervedly to be Vindicated by ſome ſolemn courſe of Law, then the forementioned Scandal: but the Promoters of this loud Cry, being loſt in a Croud of People, I cannot give my ſelf, or others, that Publick ſatisfaction that the Merits of the Cauſe requires, and therefore I am neceſſitated to give my ſelf and the World, the beſt ſatisfaction in this Point that I can.

And ſince Malice is ſo bold and daring, I do bleſs that good Providence of God, that ſet me in ſuch Circumſtances at that time, when ſuch Matter is Charged to be done; that although I am of the Negative part, I am able to convince the Author of that Report, to the ſatisfaction of all Mankind, of a moſt foul and malicious Slander; and it is ſhortly thus, Except I could be at *Hambrough* in *Germany*, and at *Weſtminſter* in *England*, at one and the ſame time, (which all will agree is wholly impoſſible) the odious Matter Charged upon me in this *Article* cannot be true; and to prove that I was at *Hambrough* at the ſame time that the Matters Charged in this *Article* were Tranſacted at *Weſtminſter*, I vouch the ſame Evidence, which I have Cited in my Defence upon the Second *Article*.

And as the Malice of this Deſign againſt my Honour, will plainly appear by what is already ſaid, ſo that theſe ſeveral Slanders were broached and ſent abroad on ſet purpoſe to way-lay me in my Election for one of the Burgeſſes for *Southwark* will yet further appear by that Scandalous Libel that goes abroad under the Name of *How and Rich*, wherein the Author (pretending) to give an impartial Account of that Election, after he had given a worthy Character of the reſt of the Competitors ſuming up all the forementioned Reports which are founded forth at large

against me in a few softer words, is pleased by an Elegant Irony to Characterize me as *a Person sufficiently Eminent for the Figure I made in the late Revolutions.* And that this Character may find the better Credit with the World, and that I may be thought still a Man of the same Spirit, the *Libellers* adds, That at the Election, *I threatned to pull one of the Kings Water-mens Coats over his Ears; and that he thereupon Replyed to me, Aye Sir, so perhaps you would my Masters too, if it were in your Power.* All which is most notoriously false, and without any colour or ground of Truth.

Fifthly, The next exception they take to my Nomination to serve as a Burgess in the present Parliament is, *That being one of the present Sheriffs for the Renowned City of* London, *I live in a Garret, and keep no House.*

Were this admitted to be wholly true, yet will it not be allowed (as I conceive,) for a good exception in the Case of a Burgess to serve in Parliament, if I be otherwise qualified for so great a Trust; it being a *Maxime,* That those that are most saving of their own Estates, will be most careful of the Peoples: But since it doth cast some Reflection on me in the Office I now bear, I confess it will require a further Answer.

I say then, that (though this be not altogether true, yet) having less of Malice then the former, I can the better bear it.

In the former matters Charged, my Adversaries run upon me as if they designed nothing less then to tear me in pie[illegible]; by this, they seem desirous only to pull me down, and degrade me: by those they gave me the Character of a very bad Subject; by this, they would have me thought no good Citizen.

And as I have disclaimed those, with that just abhorrencie, that the Merits of the Case required; so I doubt not, but upon a due Consideration of so much of the aforesaid Exception as shall be found true, as also, of that which follows, they will admit of so fair an Apology, as will not leave me under the guilt of any misdemeanour.

But before I enter upon the Examination and Answer of Particulars, I shall here enter my Protest, That I have a true and real Veneration and Esteem for that Renowned City, and have been ready to express the same upon all occasions, both at home and abroad; even before I had the Honour to be Called to the Office I now bear amongst them.

That I am always ready to pay that due observance and respect to the Government thereof that the Laws ordained for that purpose do require. That though for many years last past I have not had any private Interest and Concern by way of Trade, nor expect hereafter any benefit or advantage thereby, yet I have as hearty good wishes for the Trade, Welfare, and Prosperity of the said City, as any Citizen whatsoever.

And as I have been always ready and willing in my place and station to promote those good ends, so I brought the same resolutions with me into that Office which I now bear, and shall endeavour to discharge with all Integrity, governing my self therein (so far as I am able) by the Laws of the City, and of the Land, (to both which, I acknowledge my self to be a Servant) as my best Warrant, as well as safest Guides. And if in any thing I shall chance to fail, or fall short of this, it shall not be through any willful miscarriage or neglect, but from mistake, which may easily happen to one of my Education in the manage of an Office of that importance.

And

And now to return to that which is objected to my disparagement, it is said, *That I live in a Garret, and keep no House:* and this they aggravate by suggesting that for this reason I have been denyed several Priviledges granted to other Sheriffs, not having done the City that honour, in this respect, as others in my place have done.

Ill will, as it never speaks well, so it seldom speaks true; as it makes the worst Construction of all Actions, so it commonly mis-reports all Persons against whom it hath any pique or prejudice; this seems to be my Case, and how I come to fall under these Circumstances will best appear by that which follows.

The Truth is, being a single Person (as I have been for many years) and having neither the Concerns of a Family nor of Trade lying upon me, that I might have a setled and known Being for such time of the Year as I commonly spend in Town, without the trouble and inconveniency which commonly attends the shifting of Lodgings: I took the House I now live in, (not the Garrets but) all save the Garrets, Cellars, and one small Room upon the first Floor, with accommodations sufficient for a Gentleman of better Quality than my self; and this I have kept for Ten years last past, as my Landlord and many other persons, if need be, will testifie.

Being Chosen into this Office (not having then any knowledge of those Sumptuary Laws which our wise and prudent Ancestors had enacted for the limiting and bounding the Extravagancies of Entertainments as well as other exorbitances) submitting to that grand Imposer, Custome, I kept those Feasts which the Sheriffs have Commonly made in the beginning of their year (which I find were two Feasts (of great Charge) more than those Laws will Warrant) and I have not heard, that any one man hath complained, that I was over sparing in my Provisions and Expences upon those occasions.

And being misguided by the same Error (having agreed for a House for that purpose) I resolved (as some others in my Office had done before me) to settle my Tables so as to begin House-keeping at Christmas, which was as soon as I could well settle my own private Affairs, and under-Officers; so as the weighty concern of my Office might not suffer, and that I might be at leisure to give my self to the daily attendance upon the honourable Imployment of an Host.

But it fell out (most unluckily for this purpose) that the Alderman of the Ward wherein I live, dying, and that Ward (as big as five or six of some other Wards;) having (it seems) a better opinion of me, then those that have made this out-cry against me, thought fit by general Consent to choose me for one of the two Persons who were to be offered to the Court of Aldermen as Candidates for that Office; and the competition for the second place being between Sir *Richard Hoar*, and Mr. *Pilkinton*, and the latter carrying it upon the Poll, and we two being accordingly presented to the Court of Aldermen, they thought fit, (contrary to their own rules and customs in that Case) to wave me in the choice, and to take Mr. *Pilkinton* (a then Commoner) to supply that place amongst them, and this I take to be principally meant by the Priviledges which the Exception chargeth to be forfeited by my not keeping House.

This accident so falling out, and the good and wholsome Laws before mentioned coming to my Knowledge, (and I think no Laws are more properly called wholesome, than those that prohibit the excess of Feasting) these two Accidents (I say) gave no small check to my complacent humour, and soon induced me to change my former purpose and intention of House-keeping.

Since those Gentlemen shewed so great a dislike of my Company, besides other slightings and disrespects I found from them, which I had not known offered to any before in my place, and especially, of my Age; I thought my self in no sort obliged to carress them by the usual voluntary Treats and Entertainments; nor to far to forsake my wonted privacy, as to incumber my self with more magnificent Accommodations for so short a time as I was to abide in Office amongst them, resolving nevertheless to maintain such an Equipage as should be suitable to my Office, and to pay such services to the City as their Laws and the duty of my place requires.

I would not be thought in what I have said to design in the least to detract from the worth of that Gentleman the Bench of Aldermen thought fit to prefer before me in that Choice, or to shew any regret I have for missing of that Preferment: I acknowledge the Gentleman they have Chosen to that place, to be a very worthy

Citizen,

Citizen, and well deserving of that Honour, as well as of being one of their Representatives in Parliament.

But being to vindicate my self against the Exceptions taken to me upon this account, I think I may, upon this occasion (without prejudice to that worthy Gentleman or my self) borrow a distinction from the Papists (though I am none of their belief) which I conceive with greater reason may be applicable to my Case, then to the purpose they commonly use it. They say, *There is a merit of Congruity, as well as of Condignity*; and if any such distinction can be made, I think I may say, (without any shew of Arrogancy) that though the Person preferred to that place, may be of greater Personal and Inherent Worth then I can challenge to my self, yet the advantageous Circumstances by which I came recommended to the Court of Aldermen being duly considered, I might well expect in Congruity with those common Rules of Civility, by which that Court had wont to Govern themselves in that Affair, to have been preferred in the Choice. And if those that presented me missed of their aim in that point, I think those of the Neighbouring Burrough had as little reason to reflect it upon me, to my dishonour, as that Court had to give them the occasion to do it.

But when this is said, least by arguing the Case so Nicely, it should be thought that I am more concerned for the lois of the place, then for those Reflections that were cast upon me upon that occasion; or that I send this Paper a begging for Preferment: I shall here most freely declare, That as I had not the least Ambition for that Office, so I lay as little weight upon those Arguments I have used to justifie my pretentions to it. I think in themselves they have but little force, though I esteem them very cogent and proper to be turned upon those men with whom I have to do in this matter.

As I rest satisfied, that I had the Concurrent Votes of so many worthy Citizens for that place, and do think my Reputation well secured thereby, so I am very well contented, that I have missed the preferment; and shall be as well pleased (since it appears so practicable in my case) that those Courtly Rules by which that Court hath formerly governed themselves in their choice of Magistrates, may for the future be set aside as over-partial, and that for ever hereafter those persons only may be Elected into Places in the City, that shall be found to be of greatest integrity, and of best ability for the discharge thereof, without any regard to be had to any of those ranks and orders of men, who from those External Qualifications only, do expect the Complement of preferrence in the Choice.

For my part (being for many years last past delivered from the Incumbrances of Trade and publick Business,) I have tasted too much of the Pleasures and satisfaction of a private Life, to be fond of any Publick Trust. I have known what it is to injoy the sweet repose of quiet sleep, after the divertisements of the Day, whilst that Care and Anxiety that commonly attend those in Publick Places do not seldom render their very Beds uneasie to them. And for that reason, I should not have accepted of the Office I now hold, could I honestly have declined it; but I thought I could not fairly desert those many worthy Citizens, who after a full and free choice of me to that place, endured the fatigue of many days throng and sweat, in Justifying of their Election by the Poll. And if I can in any measure answer their Expectations in this service, I shall be very well pleased, without giving them any future trouble of the like kind.

And now I have spoken in general to the Exception taken against me, for not keeping house, and to the disrespects incurred by me upon that occasion; It remains that I should say some thing to that other point of the exception, whereby they would aggravate this neglect of mine, as redounding to the dishonour of the City, from whom I have received the honour of being preferred to this Office.

I confess, I should deem my self very unhappy if I should deservedly fall under this Censure but Custom (which I have said before is a grand Imposer) exercis-eth its Tyranny in nothing more than in Creating in Man a habit of Understanding things much other wise then the reason of the thing will bear; and many practises (upon this account) that in themselves are very unbecoming and unwarrantable, are not seldom urged and enforced as most commendable and necessary, And I doubt not, but that upon a due consideration of this matter, this will appear to be our Case.

This

This City is indeed a great and opulent City, full of People and Trade; a City eminent for the great Charters, Priviledges, and Immunities with which it is Invested; Renowned for its many Courts, and Counsels, Companies, and Societies, and for the good Laws therein Instituted and Ordained for the better Government of the several Ranks and Orders of men amongst them, whereby they are enabled to obtain their own Justice, maintain their own Peace, and pursue all the good and advantageous ends of Trade, with the better success and greater security.

And as the happiness and good estate of this City doth depend upon the right use and improvement of these advantages, and upon a due and righteous Execution of those good Laws, so the honour and esteem which this great City most justly finds from all men both at home and abroad, doth principally result and arise from hence.

I confess there is another thing that doth well befit this great City, which we call State and Grandeur, which (though it is far below, and differs in the esteem of wise men, as much from that honour which I have before described, as my Lord Mayors Horse accoutred with his richest Furniture and Trappings, doth from that honourable Person that sits upon him, cloathed with eminencie of Power and Authority) is found nevertheless most necessary to attract that Reverence from the Vulgar and common People towards so August a Government; which they (giving Judgment of things more by outward appearance then by intrinsick worth, and real value) would otherwise hardly give to the greatest Potentates.

To this end the City hath its several Ensigns of Authority and Power fitted to all Degrees of Magistracy, and shewing the place they bear in the Government with becoming greatness. They have their solemn Processions and Cavalcades, set forth with Habits, Equipage, Attendants, and other Ornaments, sutable to the several degrees and orders of Men, for the greater State.

They have also their Publick Shews and Triumphs upon set times and occasions, adorned with much splendor, to entertain and divert the People with Gaze and Admiration.

And they have (besides these) their Publick Feasts upon set times and solemn occasions of Assembling and rejoycing together for their refreshment. And I do agree, that as these being practised with that moderation, and within those limits which the Laws of the City upon great reason have wisely Ordained, may be of good use to the ends aforesaid; so I have not been wanting in performing my part therein, unless it shall be said, That I have not attended those Cavalcades and Processions, which were made last *Easter* to those Sermons which ought to have been at the *Spittle*.

And for this I shall only say, that though I did intend to bear my part in those Solemnities also, yet my Lord Mayor (on whose Person only I am obliged to attend upon all Publick occasions within the Liberties of *London*) not being in a Condition to go abroad, and the rest (who I thought would have been more tender in preserving that antient Custom which had been but once Changed in Three hundred years, (and then upon an extraordinary occasion) as I could ever hear) being pleased (for what private reason I know not) to steer another Course, I did not think I was obliged to suffer my self to be led by the Nose by those that thought me unfit to be privy to their Councels, or to know the reasons of so mysterious a Resolution for the alteration of that Antient Practice.

But let the Consequence of this Accident be what it will, I conceive it falls not within our present question; as to the matter of the Sheriffs ordinary course and way of House-keeping, the neglect of which, is here to be Answered: And therefore, to speak more directly to the point, I say, *First*, that this (not being accounted amongst those Publick Solemnities which (as I have before noted) make up the Cities Grandure) I conceive detracts nothing from the honour of the City, whatever reflection it may have upon my own personal Reputation.

In the next place I do little doubt, but that the common course, and method of the Sheriffs House-keeping, upon due consideration will appear to be of so little Honour, that on the contrary it will be found a great prejudice to the City, and a real scandal to the Government that allows it; as well as an unbecoming and unreasonable burden and slavery to him that bears it.

In this Method of House-keeping they divide the Week into certain and set days,

some whereof are called Publick days, which they imploy in Feasting of the Companies of the City, and other grand Feasts; the other called private days, are commonly spent in Treating of particular Friends and Relations, and such as come upon occasional Visits.

As to that of the Feasting of the Companies (of which the greatest Observation is made) I think nothing can be less honourable to the Sheriffs, and nothing more inconvenient to the Citizens, and prejudicial to that sober Industry by which a Trading City thrives best.

As to the honour that accrues to the Sheriffs thereby I cannot well understand it, since (according to the usual practise in this case) the Companies Generally Invite themselves to the Sheriffs, and as a token of their Respects present them with two or three Guineys towards the Charge of a double Treat; one in Winter of the Livery-Men alone, with such other persons as may accidentally come to fill up the Tables, and the other in Summer of the same Persons with their Wives. I must Confess as often as I consider this, it seems to me much like that Custom in some Countries where two poor Servants being newly Married keep a Bride Chamber (as it is Called) and making a Provision for that purpose, Invite some of the best of the Neighbourhood to a Treat, the issue of which imports a Gift of Money, Houshold-goods, Stock or Cattle, or some such like Present to set up the New House-keepers, which much exceeds the Value of the Treat. And if in our Case the exorbitant expences, (in which the Sheriffs of late have generally striven to exceed one another) bring it to an indifferent Club, I cannot see that any great honour redounds to the Sheriffs thereby, and it is so far from obliging the Citizens, that it is become a considerable yearly Tax upon them, which many cannot so well spare, nor would so easily pay, were they not solicited by the Masters and Wardens of their several Companies, urging this unreasonable Custome as the Argument for the Payment of this Tribute.

And how great an Enemie this great expence of time, in Luxurious Eating and Drinking is, to that sober Industry, which is the rise and glory of a Trading City, is easily seen; and the less to be excused, since those days for Assembling and Feasting in their several Companies at their respective Halls, are sufficient for their reasonable Repast, and Divertisement as well as for maintaining that Amity and Friendship, which is one of the ends of those meetings.

And lest there should be sufficient Matter wanting for the encreasing of the Slaverie, as well as the Expence of the Sheriffs, and that this Extravagant Course may continue the whole Year, invitations are provided for the filling up of those Publick days which are not spent in Feasting of the Companies, wherein by an unwarrantable sort of Emulation, Men seem often to Vie one with the other in lavishness of Expence. And others less able, being Ambitious to keep pace with those that went before them, do not only Squander many a good Childs Portion, but transgressing those good Laws made for the bounding of their Expence, sometime spend in one year half, (if not the whole, of that which they) or their Parents have been many years getting with sore labour and travail, as manifestly appears by those who not long after they have born these grand Offices dye Beggars, or spend the remaining part of their Lives in a Goal.

And it may be further noted, as a bad Consequence attending this Extravagancie, to the no little detriment of the City, and dimination of its greatness, That since Magistracy by this means is rendred so over-burdensome, many Rich and Prudent Men, otherwise well qualified for Places of Publick Trust, and who (as matters were formerly ordered) would have embraced the freedom of the City as a matter of Honour and great Priviledge, by a wise foresight have thought fit rather to decline it, than submit to those grand inconveniencies, which (through the neglect of those good Laws, and the Prevalency of bad Customs) seem to be entailed on it; for which reason likewise, many Freemen that are in all respects well qualified for so great a Trust, being called upon for that purpose, chuse rather to purchase their own Liberty, by Paying a considerable Fine, than to bear any place in the Government; or run the hazard of those Clamours that they should find by a more Frugal management thereof.

In the mean time, I hope I shall endeavour to govern my self so in this Affair, as neither

neither to be wanting in any thing that shall be Essential to the Duty of my place, nor to exceed so far, as for the vanity of one years jollity or applause, to disappoint or discourage the hopes of those that may reasonably expect some considerable share of the Fruits of my former Labours, which (considering my Age, and that the time for the encreasing of my Estate is long since gone) ought the rather to be regarded. And I pray God, that Pride, fullness of Bread, and Idleness, which was charged upon *Sodom*, and *Jerusalem*, as the Cause of Gods Judgments, may not grow to that height of Excess in this City, as to become the Ruine and Destruction of it.

There remains one part of the Objection in the matter of House-keeping yet behind; that is, *That I keep no setled House, nor a set Table:* to which, (though I lightly touched it before) I shall give this further Answer, and I think my Circumstances considered, it will admit of a very easie excuse.

I conceive that my Condition, as being called out of the Country (where my concerns lye) to serve this Office in the City, (where for many years last past I have had no setled Habitation or Dealing) doth much resemble that of some Citizens, that having their setled aboade and business in the City, in respect of their Estates in the Country are many times put to bear the Office of Sheriff there; in which Case, they do not look upon themselves as obliged, nor is it expected from the Country, that they should keep a constant House and Table there, as they are wont to do which have their constant Residence amongst them. And if they do attend the Judges, and the business of the County with a sufficient Retinue, and with due Care; and make such solemn Entertainments as the Law requires upon those occasions, no exception is taken to them; and why more should be expected from me in the like Case, I do not well understand.

Had I a setled House and Family in this City (as commonly those that are Chosen to this Office have) of Course I should have kept a House, and a set Table, and should not have grudged to have inlarged it in some measure upon this occasion; and there is this further in my Case, that being a single Person, without Wife or Family that might require a House, and which, (besides the divertisement of their Company) would be assisting to me in the Management thereof, I thought I had the less reason to take upon me that melancholy piece of trouble; and I am well assured, that those friends that would have looked upon themselves as obliged to Visit me upon this occasion, and are the only persons concerned in this part of the exception, will not have the worse thoughts of me upon this account, but had rather that I should enjoy them with wonted freedom, than out of meer Formality be confined for a year, to so great a trouble and inconvenience, for the sake only of receiving their Visits.

The last exception that is taken to me, is that according to the example of my Predecessors, I do not voluntarily contribute to the Necessities of the Poor Prisoners belonging to the City Prisons, and County-Goal.

Those Capital Crimes that have been before objected, carrying with them no colour of Truth; I take this Objection (that hath much of Truth in it) to be more pressing then all the rest, there being more to be pleaded for Acts of Charity, than for profuseness.

My Contest is not with the Poor Prisoners, to whom Bowels of Compassion ought to be shewn, but with that Male-Administration that hath occasioned this Grievance. The Lawyers say, *That a particular mischief ought rather to be born, then a general and publick inconveniency admitted.* And as those Laws which provide for the Government of the Prisons have been much neglected by occasion of the Sheriffs taking upon themselves this Charge, so I know not but the putting a stop to these Payments (which are but voluntary) may give a good occasion for enquiry into those Laws, and to the restoring of them to a due execution, which would be of greater advantage to the Poor Prisoners than any thing that is now done, and would also encourage others to such Charitable Benevolencies, and Legacies, as have been formerly given for their better support, and also prevent the loss of those charitable Donations which its said have happened by want of due care in the Execution of the said Laws.

As the Laws of the Land do provide, that the Counties shall maintain their Prisoners, so the Laws of this City both Antient and Modern do place the Government and Care of the Prisons in the Court of Aldermen and a Committee of the City, to be Annually appointed by and out of the Common Councel, as the best Expedient

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our Wiſe and Prudent Anceſtors could find, for preventing thoſe inconveniencies under which the Poor Priſoners now groan.

And if by holding of my hand, and by thoſe Arguments I have given to excuſe my ſparingneſs in this and other matters, I ſhould prove ſo happy as to give an occaſion for Retrieving of thoſe good Laws which the Ancient Prudence of this City hath moſt plentifully Provided for preſerving and promoting the good Eſtate of Her Citizens, ſo as they may no longer lye Dormant amongſt their Records, but be put in due Execution; I think neither Priſoner, nor any Freeman will hereafter find any juſt cauſe to complain of me.

And in effecting ſo good a Work, as the World would eaſily believe that I ſhould have greater ſatisfaction in my ſelf, ſo I ſhould not doubt in the end of my Year, notwithſtanding the great Cry that hath been made againſt me with ſo little reaſon, to have more thanks from the greateſt part of my fellow Citizens, upon that account; and that the Obligation would laſt longer with them, then if I had according to late Example ſpent Eight or Nine thouſand pound in the Year of my Shrievaltie.

But this is but a good wiſh, that fell out occaſionally in the Current of my Diſcourſe, a matter, rather to be deſired, than effected by any thing that I can ſay, or do; it is not for me to think I can bear back the ſtrong Torrent of Cuſtome, when the Laws of the City are not ſtrong enough to do it: If I ſhall by this eſſay be able in any meaſure to ſtem that Tyde of Reproach which runs upon me with that violence, that it threatens to over-ſet and make Shipwrack of my Honour and Reputation, (which is the proper Deſign of this Paper) I ſhall deem my ſelf in no ſmall meaſure Happy and Succeſsful.

A good name is as precious Oyntment, and as I ought to Value it, ſo (methinks) I ſhould now at length be able to prevail with the World to be ſo juſt, as to conſider what real grounds or reaſons there may be for ſo great a Noiſe and Clamour; and the better to enforce this Juſtice, I ſhall lay before them, the great example of the All-righteous Judge.

When the Cry of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* was very great, and their Sin very grievous calling for Vengeance from Heaven againſt the Unrighteous Inhabitants thereof, he would not ſtreight-way rain down Fire and Brimſtone upon them; but ſaid, *I will go down now, and ſee whether they have done altogether according to the Cry of it, which is come unto me, and if not, I will know.* And we find, that he gave *Abraham* leave to make the beſt Defence he could for them before the Judgment came.

The Sin of *Sodom* was very Great and Notorious, and the Cry of it came up to Him that could not be deceived by falſe Reports; therefore his Deſign in this was not to ſalve his own Juſtice, but to give the credulous and ill-natured World (which is apt to believe all the ill that is ſaid, rather than to examine the Truth of things:) this Great, and Early Example, as a moſt Sacred and Divine Rule to Govern themſelves by in all caſes, of this Nature.

And if by what I have ſaid, and here offered, I ſhall be able to prevail with a too cenſorious World, to leave the Judgment Seat a little while, and come down and ſee, whether the Matters Charged againſt me, be according to the Cry thereof that is come unto them, or not, before they give final Judgment: I think in what I have here ſaid, I ſhall not have troubled my ſelf, nor them in vain.

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